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ABSTRACT

This document reviews the meaning of "parity" from three broad categories: teacher education institutions, teachers as represented by unions and professional organizations, and individuals or groups occupying a middle ground. The major points of view of each category are presented and substantiated by excerpts from study commission and task force reports and individual and organizational references. A 12-item bibliography is included. (MJM)

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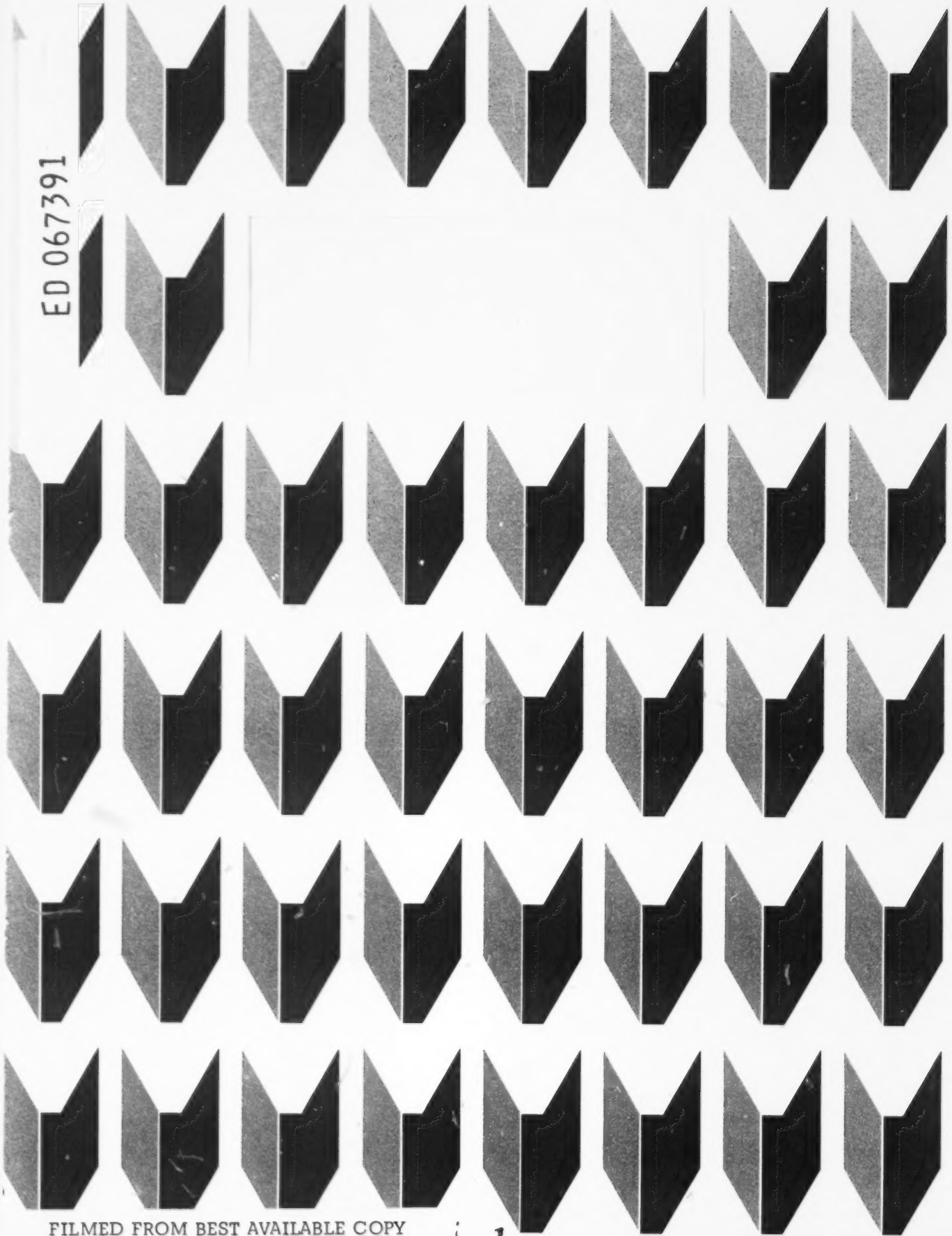

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WHAT DO THEY MEAN BY PARITY?

by Moira B. Mathieson

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FOREWORD

Parity is one of many new vocabulary words circulating throughout the educational community. This paper attempts to provide an overview of diverse viewpoints. Hopefully, it will contribute to rational and meaningful discussion. Where appropriate for particular settings, some of the ideas will be implemented.

This paper on parity is an example of how an ERIC clearinghouse analyzes the literature, puts together a publication to place a topic in broad perspective, and simulates further reading by providing a bibliography and retrieval terms useful in searching Research in Education and Current Index to Journals in Education.

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--Joel L. Burdin
Director

November 1972

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This document reviews the meaning of "parity" from three broad categories: teacher education institutions, teachers as represented by unions and professional organizations, and individuals or groups occupying a middle ground. The major points of view of each category are presented and substantiated by excerpts from study commission and task force reports and individual and organizational references. A 12-item bibliography is included. (MJM)

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TOPIC: *"What Do They Mean by Parity?"*

DESCRIPTORS TO USE IN CONTINUING SEARCH OF RIE AND CIJE:

*Education Responsibility
*Educational Accountability
*College School Cooperation
Community Cooperation
Teacher Education

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*Asterisk(s) indicate major descriptors.

WHAT DO THEY MEAN BY PARITY?

by Moira Mathieson

Fashions exist in the educational world as much as in any other, and one of the vogue words for 1972 is "parity." Unfortunately, as with most fashions, there is widespread confusion as to exactly what is meant, and an apparently coherent discussion may prove to involve people talking of widely disparate concepts. The result can be confusion and drastic noncommunication, and so it may be worthwhile to try to discover just what the main protagonists have in mind when they talk of "parity," in the hope that even if this does not result in agreement between those involved, it may at least lead to greater understanding of the points of views.

Webster is always a good point of departure - he at least does not hesitate to provide a definition: "Parity - the quality or state of being equal; close equivalence or resemblance; equality of rank, nature, or value." So far, so good, but when we begin to look at the interpretations of this concept by various educational organizations, this simple clarity does not last for long.

The interpreters can be identified as falling into three broad categories - the teacher education institutions, the teachers as represented by their unions and professional organizations, and individuals or groups occupying a middle ground and attempting to bring these two sometimes opposing sides into some sort of harmony. A brief article can only touch on the major points of view of these categories, but it may serve to indicate some of the problems and open the way to wider understanding.

Evan R. Collins, in his 1971 Hunt Lecture, "The Impossible Imperatives: Power, Authority, and Decision Making in Teacher Education," surveyed the whole problem. Commenting on teacher education institutions, he says:

> The faculties of the schools and departments of education stand at the pivot of *[a]* sometimes uneasy alliance. They must take the lead in continuous adjustment and accommodation. . . .
>
> It becomes imperative, then, for the university to redefine its goals, not only to clarify its aims but also to enlist support, to earn acknowledgment of its legitimacy. . . . We cannot expect true consensus regarding goals which result from the exercise of arbitrary power, or from an empty "ploy" aimed only at consent without realistic participation. We may reasonably expect renewed support -- the acknowledgment of authority - only from those who have given assent to the process and thus to the products of decision making.
>
> Our relationships with school systems and classroom teachers, among individuals or organizations, are the relationships of equals -

of equals with differentiated responsibilities and with accountability for different functions. The established school systems, through their administrative staffs and classroom teachers are, and should be, held primarily responsible for the education of pupils at elementary and secondary levels. For the education of teachers at all levels we hold to account the teacher educators. (3)

However, he sees the need for a broadening of involvement, although this hardly extends as far as other protagonists consider necessary and desirable:

> It has been the function and responsibility of the professional school or department to effect a constructive reconciliation of the disparate elements and to maintain a balanced program, enlisting the cooperation of the liberal arts faculty for both general education and subject matter preparation, and the participation of the practitioners in the field to provide clinical experiences and supervision. (3)

The 1972 Charles W. Hunt Lecture was given by Edward C. Pomeroy, who spoke for the most part for the middle ground, although he also clearly expressed the claims of the teacher education institutions when he said: "The higher education community must assume its rightful role in this process. Too much experience and knowledge reside at the college level to bypass them in these discussions." (8)

Among some of the major achievements of higher education institutions in the past twenty years he cited

> the identification of teacher education as an appropriate and important function for all types of higher education institutions and not just for specialized institutions; acceptance of the shared responsibility for teacher education by higher education, teachers, and the lay public, as evidenced by a broadly based accreditation program; and the expansion of governmental involvement in teacher education, particularly at the federal level, with all its new opportunities and resources as well as new problems. (8)

The conclusions which Pomeroy reaches, however, must seem unduly optimistic to those who are still struggling for recognition of differing points of view:

> Teacher education is now firmly identified as the proper business of all types of institutions of higher learning. A broadly based accreditation program recognizes the shared responsibility of higher education, teachers, and the public for the improvement of teacher education. . . . Progress in the joining together of academicians and pedagogues to meet the needs of prospective teachers has been effected. And lastly, expanded governmental involvement, particularly at the federal level, is here to stay, bringing with it additional resources, new opportunities, and new problems. (8)

While these statements are true, the situation is not as rosy as they suggest. Progress has indeed been made and new approaches are being tried, but it would be naive to believe that the world of teacher education is all sweetness and light, and that knives are not sharpened. This is indicated by the stronger line taken by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education in their statement on Professional Practices Legislation (December 1971):

> The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education strongly supports the expanded involvement of the teaching profession in the establishment and maintenance of effective standards for professional development. The Association has a continuing record of support for meaningful cooperative effort of school and college personnel directed toward the realization of high standards for teaching personnel at every level.
>
> The AACTE recognizes that often there has been minimum involvement of elementary and secondary school practitioners in the processes of licensure, accreditation, and other matters affecting professional standards in teaching. It recognizes further the urgent need to correct such inadequacies now. The Association is troubled, however, by the "Model Teachers Standards and Licensure Act," currently proposed by the National Education Association. . . . In calling for state standards commissions of thirteen members, the NEA model act provides for only two members representative of higher education. While certain responsibilities of such standards commissions might appropriately be discharge by groups composed chiefly of elementary and secondary teachers, it is clear that decisions regarding the programs of preparation of teachers at pre-service and continuing education levels must reflect a much broader involvement of other members of the profession whose major responsibilities and competencies are in those areas. (1)

This Model Teacher Standards and Licensure Act prepared by NEA calls for the appointment of state standards commissions, to be made up of seven teachers, two supervisors or administrators, two higher education faculty, one specialist, and one assistant. The model was developed by NEA's former National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards, with the help of NEA's Commission of Professional Rights and Responsibilities and the NEA Office of General Council, from contributions submitted by hundreds of educators from all over the nation. Under the bill, teacher preparation institutions would be subject to study and accreditation by the state commission. The statute provides for reciprocal agreements with other states in respect to accreditation and licensing, and also declares that any person who practices teaching or performs educational duties without commission authorization is guilty of a misdemeanor. The suggested commission membership would clearly put considerable power in the hands of the teachers.

A defense of the teachers' claim to greater control over the profession is made in an unsigned article in the December 1971 issue of *Today's Education:*

In the past, almost everybody but the teacher has called the tune in education. Teachers have traditionally taken direction from others - local and state school boards, legislators, parents, powerful community leaders. Because most teachers are paid from the public funds, many think of them as public servants, and, as such, subject in all matters to the whims of the taxpayers.

That concept is changing. With the increased public demand that teachers be accountable for the learning of children, the entire teacher profession is taking a new look at what is needed to improve teaching and learning. And some members of the profession (among them leaders of NEA) are concluding that teachers are not able to teach as well as they know how to teach because they unfortunately have little control over their profession.

Practitioners therefore are actively seeking more responsibility for professional matters. They maintain it is neither feasible nor fair for them to be held accountable for whether or not Johnny and Jane and Hector and Paula learn to read or to understand math concepts or whatever until teachers also have the responsibility for making decisions about how reading teachers, math teachers, and other teachers should be trained, in what institutions they should study, who should be licensed to teach, and how teachers' skills can be kept up to date. (11)

Evan Collins referred to this point of view in his Hunt Lecture:

The NEA, through TEPS, is frank to acknowledge its plans to take over the direction of teacher education. . . "*teachers* must have the major voice. . . they must be largely responsible for determining who shall be candidates for the profession and by what standards teachers shall be prepared (including accreditation of institutions.)" (3)

The U.S. Office of Education has sponsored a Study Commission on Undergraduate Education and the Education of Teachers which is in the process of publishing study documents on three symposia - *Education for 1984 and After,* involving deans and leaders in institutions educating teachers; *The University Can't Train Teachers,* in which school administrators discuss school-based undergraduate education for teachers; and *Of Education and Human Community,* dealing with the community building process.

Some comments from the second of these publications are worth quoting, because they represent individual opinions on the college versus school-based teacher education question.

Robert Schwartz, the former principal of Adams High Schools in Portland, Oregon, says:

. . . most colleges, as they are presently structured, are so shot through with dysfunctional models of teaching, that I am very skeptical as to the quality of teacher education that they

> can be expected to provide. . . . I assume that we pretty much agree, around this table, that most teacher-training programs based on university campuses aren't of much use to us, because they are too far removed from the actual experience of the schools. (6)

Richard L. Foster, superintendent of the Berkeley Unified School District in California says:

> I have come to the conlusion that the university can't train teachers. I'm saying they can't be trained on the university campus; that the fourth or fifth year, whatever it is going to be, has got to be in the school. (6)

Finally, Paul Salmon, executive secretary of the American Association of School Administrators, comments:

> I think that we have to go to a school-centered training system. I think that we have to do that in order to make teacher training relevant. I don't think that you can find anybody going through a regular teacher training activity now in any university that feels that it's relevant. I think that the school-based model is viable and I do think that it will have an impact on the market. (6)

The picture created so far is one of embattled organizations deep in a power struggle. The important question is whether it will result in better schools or happier children. Fortunately for all concerned (including, eventually, those most engrossed in the situation) there is a calmer middle territory, and it is here that experiments are being conducted which provide real cause for optimism.

One proposal was put forward in a task force paper, *Educational Personnel for Urban Schools,* commissioned originally by the Associated Organizations for Teacher Education:

> Within an urban setting, a number of universities might bring teacher education to the central city, even providing dormitory and laboratory facilities close to, if not in each such university center. Thus, the first rung of higher education and teacher education would be accessible to the student needing to take advantage of it, and the program would be located within the school system benefiting from the process.
>
> As an association of organizations for teacher education, AOTE views its responsibility - in the present instance and other comparable circumstances - to point to the promise of those educational changes which have a good deal of potential intrinsic merit and to caution against dealing with any conceptual model of educational organization as a patent medicine that at last will bring the long postponed cure for educational arthritis, rheumatism, and psychosomatic asthma. (12)

The greatest hope for development seems to lie in the concept of Teacher Centers. Edward C. Pomeroy had this to say about them:

> Currently planned teacher renewal sites and teacher centers, the next national thrust of the U. S. Office of Education, build on the concept of utilizing the schools and the communities; these centers will serve as proper partners for colleges and universities. Together they can provide appropriate experiences in the education of teachers. Closely associated with the involvement of schools in teacher education is the concept of career-long development of teachers. Faced with the lightning rapidity of professional and social change, teacher education can ill afford to see itself as a one-shot affair culminating in a baccalaureate degree. It suggests, moreover, that increasingly inservice education will be based on school and teacher needs rather than on arbitrary faculty decisions at a neighboring collegiate institution. . . . What we are moving toward, hopefully, is a new principle of parity among the colleges and universities, the schools, and the community. This seems a logical and useful extension of measure already well documented to spread the base of participation in teacher education.
>
> A basic requirement for success in this development is communication between teachers, citizens, and professors. That calls for the involvement of higher education institutions in the towns and cities they serve. Colleges and universities need such involvement in all aspects of their curriculums. Teacher education can provide them with the door through which service to the community as well as support from constituencies can effectively pass in both directions.
>
> Is the current structure adequate in the light of widened participation in teacher preparatory programs? If the schools and the community are to be involved, shouldn't their efforts be incorporated into the purview of the accrediting agency? (8)

A useful description of the philosophy behind a teacher center is contained in the introduction to *In West Virginia, It Is Working: One Teacher Education Center in Action,* edited by Kathryn Maddox:

> Both schools of education and school systems have erred in believing the myth that teacher education was the sole responsibility of the teachers colleges. In actuality, over a period of time, the university has broadened its services to meet the demand of more public agencies. Some members of the university have resisted these demands, especially in the education of teachers, perceiving in them a threat to the university as a center of research, educational excellence, and contemplation. They have voiced dire warnings of ultimate educational mediocrity. All too often the university becomes an instrument for maintaining the status quo, and sometimes is rather conservative, in comparison to others involved in teacher education. In matters of teacher education, The university must learn to utilize, in positive and productive ways, the public school system and the larger community of which it is a part.

> By the same token, public schools have historically been unwilling to assume real responsibility for preservice education of teachers, except for providing classrooms and teachers to supervise student teaching experiences. They have made no really serious intellectual or financial commitment to staff development through inservice training. The idea that the university prepares or produces the teachers and the public schools consume them must be abandoned. Both must view themselves as preparers of teachers and assume joint responsibility for continuous teacher education.
>
> A Teacher Education Center. . . is a concept rather than a physical place. It recognizes the principle of shared sovereignty. Thus, it involves public schools, communities, students, the state departments of education, and colleges in matters of teacher education. It is an acceptance of the principle of parity in the allocation of responsibility for educating teachers. It implies new administrative and financial relationships which involve joint appointments and shared budgets. Individuals who are involved in these new relationships accept the intrinsic worth of exchange programs for public schools and college personnel. Individual, group, and institutional experinces at all levels of the education spectrum are viewed as avenues of expression and understanding, through which the student of teaching may build a positive self-image and begin to relate to others in non-defensive ways. (5)

The *Manchester Interview* by Theodore E. Andrews is an imaginative leap into the future in an attempt to visualize a form of teacher education eight years from now. It is described as a "candid conversation with educators in the United States," and as "reprinted from the September 1980 edition of the *Manchester Magazine,* published in Manchester, England." Although the participants in the interview are fictitious, the ideas advanced are entirely serious and possible. The following three quotations are all from the comments of "George Collins," the director of the teaching center under discussion:

> The teaching center has, I think, finally broken down the dichotomy that has occurred in the professional ranks that says, (in many people's minds), that the classroom teacher is a professional and anyone who isn't a classroom teacher is somehow or other not a professional.
>
> [The policy board] uses subcommittees. There is a subcommittee on state coordination which has a representative from the state education department. That same representative works with all seven teaching centers in the state so that the activities of one never develop in total isolation from the activities of the other; also, he facilitates communication between the centers. The most interesting of the subcommittees is the assessment board. The assessment board includes teachers and administrators from throughout the state. The fifteen-member board is elected

by the statewide education bargaining agency. Until a few years ago, teacher unions and professional associations were rivals, but since their recent merger all educational personnel within the state are represented by one bargaining agency. Teachers, administrators, and teaching center staff are among the fifteen members. This board reviews the exit criteria established by the teaching center. It not only must approve them before they are used by the teaching center, but also it is actively involved in developing them. This board is in a sense the professional board of licensing for this state, although we don't license teachers as we did in the past.

Every teacher who receives a diploma is visited four times a year for a period of at least four days on each visit during the first three years of his teaching career. These visits tell us how well this teacher functions in an actual school situation based on the training given him at the teaching center. In addition, we wish to findout if there are job expectations, or role expectations as we would call them, that are being created in the schools that we had not anticipated. One of the greatest tragedies of teacher education in the past has been the gap that has existed between what the schools were doing and what the collegiate preparation groups were offering. This observation of the teacher on the job provides the center with feedback that leads directly to changes in the required competencies and the role definitions. This is one of the most essential elements of the teaching center. (2)

Meanwhile, back in the present, Task Force '72, set up by the U.S. Office of Education, has also been wrestling with the concept of parity. The draft of its final report contains these comments:

As Task Force '72 progressed, it became clear that everyone everywhere desired some kind of cooperation among the various sectors of education in the development of new educational programs. So Task Force '72 began to emphasize parity in the organizational and invitation lists of the meetings that it sponsored. . . . Even after many hours of discussion, the Task Force was unable to come up with any clear, widely supported definition of parity. In session after session, the meaning continued to be confused not for the sake of confusion, but because, as with love, there are many different opinions about its meaning. It became obvious, however, that BEPD [Bureau of Educational Personnel Development] had set the national pace in this important concept and the Task Force recommends that the Bureau should continue in its leadership role. Evidence indicates that community people, teachers, and others previously not much involved in the development of educational programs want, in fact demand, to be included in developing significant educational policies and programs.

Task Force '72 not only agrees that these previously locked out groups should be included but feels that their involvement will

significantly improve the quality and responsiveness of BEPD programs. The Task Force recommends that the Bureau develop a position paper on the subject as soon as possible and distribute it widely over the nation. The Task Force recommends a posture that implies a positive producer-consumer relationship; a full partnership in the development, implementation and evaluation of educational programs; and a framework in which all concerned parties have maximum opportunity to influence programs. (10)

The tentative definition of parity eventually prepared by the Task Force is worth quoting:

> Collaborative, mutual, deliberative decision-making and planning on the part of those giving and receiving services. Shared decision-making with equivalent respect to all input. The relationship of parties to a common enterprise which is characterized by the due attention to the expertise, perspectives, and needs of each of the parties, and as a means of making decisions for the common good. (10)

One fact emerges clearly from all the discussions - no one group of institutions or organizations can impose its will on the others if true parity is to be achieved. As Paul Olson says:

> One does not create parity with guidelines. The powerless community has to create a sufficient political self-consciousness for itself so that the parity already exists before the guidelines come down. Federal funds never come into a neighborhood and create parity; at least, I can't imagine that they would. (6)

The Rosner Report has this to say on parity:

> Parity effects change in teacher education by including representatives from the lay public, school administration, teacher associations, university liberal arts and education faculties, and students in teacher education on an advisory board influencing the governance of teacher training programs. The board would assist in the development of policy governing both school and university based components of the teacher education program. This modification of policy formulating procedures tends to assure the responsiveness of teacher training to the publicly expressed objectives and priorities of the school and community. (9)

The word "parity" has strong legal overtones and a word which should be closely linked with it is "justice." The end to which all parity-based programs should be aiming is a situation which will provide justice for all those involved - more adequate training for teachers to fit them for the circumstances under which they must work, to encourage the potentially good teachers, and to eliminate the potentially bad; an appreciation of the valuable contributions which can still be

made by the teacher education institutions; a much greater involvement of the schools, both at the administrative and classroom teacher levels, which in turn will increase the range and interest of the teacher's role; a similar involvement of the community and in particular the parents; and finally but most importantly, a better education for the children for whom, after all, all this complicated and cumbersome apparatus exists. It will be tragic if, instead of becoming the beneficiaries of all these exciting new opportunities and ideas, they find themselves instead being trampled under by the opposing battalions struggling futilely over irrelevant questions of salary scales, status, and prestige.

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